(b) No, Sir.

(c) and (d) Do not arise in view of (b) above.

Demand of Private Telecom Operators

1457. SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Access Deficit Charge regime, supposed to provide support for rural telecom is fraught with regulatory, legal and procedural short-comings;

(b) whether the Universal Service Fund, operational from 2002, is adequate to provide support for the rural telecom expansion;

(c) whether the private telecom operators are opposing the ADC regime and demanding its abolition; and

(d) if so, Government's views thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) Some of the private operators have filed a petition in Telecom Disputes Settlement and Appellate Tribunal (TDSAT) raising procedural issues.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) Access Deficit Charge regime should continue at present.

Malfunctioning of Exchanges in BSNL areas

1458. SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether there have been complaints of malfunctioning of the exchanges in BSNL areas whereby local calls of 3 minute duration get snapped after 10-20 seconds due to technical fault;

(b) if so, whether the local customer entitled to get 3 minute talk time

for local calls has to make many calls aggregating 3 minute duration and pay multiple call charges instead of single local call; and

(c) if so, the steps being taken to rectify the system to ensure full utilization of call time?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) No, Sir. No such complaints, about local calls of 3 minutes duration getting snapped after 10-20 seconds have been received in general. However, there are a few isolated cases of small capacity rural exchages of C-DOT technology, getting interrupted occasionally.

(b) and (c) The problem is being resolved by C-DOT the technology provider of these exchanges.

Opening of Post Offices in Gram Panchayat villages

†1459. SHRI MANGANI LAL MANDAL: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the total number of Gram Panchayat villages without any post office is 1,15,605 in the country which is about 49.35 per cent of the Gram Panchayat villages in the country; and

(b) if so, whether Government propose to open and provide post offices in all such Gram Panchayat villages in the country where there are no post offices and by when?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) To the extent of information available, there are 1,23,014 Gram Panchayat villages without post office as on 31-3-2004, which constitutes approximately 50% of the total Gram Panchayat villages in the country.

(b) Post offices are opened subject to a proposal complying with distance, population and income norms, and availability of resources. Details of the related norms are given in the Statement (*see* below). Therefore, it is not possible to fix a time frame within which Post Offices will be provided in all Gram Panchayat villages.

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.